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## REPORT

FROM

### THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY,

IN COMPLIANCE

*With a resolution of the Senate of the 20th February, 1837, in relation to the location and cost of marine hospitals on the western waters, and the regulation of the marine hospital fund.*

DECEMBER 12, 1837.

Referred to the Committee on Commerce, and ordered to be printed, and that 500 additional copies be furnished for the use of the Senate.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT,  
December 11, 1837.

SIR: The following report is made in obedience to certain resolutions of the Senate, passed February 30, 1837.

They directed the Secretary of the Treasury to ascertain:

1st. What it will cost to erect three hospitals of suitable dimensions, for the relief of sick and disabled seamen and watermen upon the waters of the Mississippi river, at the most suitable places for that purpose; also, what it will cost to erect the same number, if needed, at the most important points on the Atlantic and Gulf coasts.

2d. To draw up the project of a law to regulate the disbursement of funds for the relief of sick and disabled seamen, and for the government of hospitals erected for that purpose.

3d. To enumerate those ports and places in the United States, where, because suitable accommodations for the sick cannot be obtained, or from any other cause, there is a strong necessity for hospitals; and to make report on this and the other resolutions at the next session of Congress.

I have the honor to state that, by an act of Congress subsequent to the date of the resolutions, to wit, on the 3d of March, 1837, the President was authorized, among other things, to select and purchase three suitable sites for marine hospitals, on the waters of the Mississippi river, and to employ, not exceeding three medical gentlemen of the army, to examine and report on such sites. By a further provision of the same act, it is directed that suitable plans and estimates be prepared under the direction of the Secretary of War, for the construction of the hospitals therein authorized, and submitted to Congress at the commencement of the next session of Congress thereafter. Regarding the legislation referred to as superseding the necessity of any report from this department on the first clause of the first resolution, it only remains to state, in answer to

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the last clause of it, what sum, in the opinion of the department, it will cost to erect three hospitals at the most important points on the Atlantic and Gulf coasts.

By a report made from this department, dated December 7, 1836, in reply to a former resolution of the Senate, it will be seen that, according to the views then entertained, and for the reasons therein given, public hospitals were considered to be more imperiously called for at New Orleans, Mobile, Savannah, and at some convenient point on the coast of North Carolina, than elsewhere. (See document No. 7, 2d session 24th Congress.)

Congress acquiescing in the necessity of such institutions at New Orleans and Mobile, appropriated, by the act of 3d March last, the sum of \$70,000 for the purchase of a site and erection of suitable buildings for the hospital at the former place, and the sum of \$10,000 for the same objects at the latter. Arrangements are in progress, and it is expected will be perfected, for the construction of a suitable edifice at New Orleans. It is ascertained, however, that the sum appropriated for a similar purpose at Mobile, is inadequate to the object. Accordingly, Mobile and the other two points previously indicated as entitled to priority in the location of such institutions, may be regarded as the most important points on the Atlantic and Gulf coasts where hospitals are, in the estimation of the department, needed.

From estimates submitted to the collector by practical workmen, it is believed a sum of \$15,000, in addition to the existing appropriations, would be required to purchase a site and erect a suitable hospital at Mobile; and it is estimated that the sum of \$20,000 would be requisite for the same purpose at each of the other places.

Under the 3d resolution, it may be observed, that Holmes's Hole or Edgartown, or some other convenient point in the neighborhood of Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts, and Key West, Florida, may be enumerated as places, where, from the absence of suitable accommodation from the local authorities, and the concurrence of other causes, there would appear at present to exist a stronger necessity for public hospitals than in other districts. On the western waters very comfortable accommodations are now provided for the few who are entitled; but, if the burdens as well as the benefits of the proceeds of the fund be extended to all seamen, additional accommodations would probably be required at St. Louis, in Missouri, and Memphis, in Tennessee.

Having thus given the views of the department in regard to the subjects embraced in the first and last resolution, it remains to submit those having reference to the project of a law to regulate the disbursements from the fund, and for the government of hospitals established by the United States.

Presuming that it was the intention of the Senate that the views of the department on so much of the resolution should have reference to the existing system, as established by the acts of 16th July, 1798, and 5th May, 1802, and not to a new and different organization of the whole subject, I would respectfully submit, that all hospitals erected for the relief and accommodation of seamen in the merchant service be placed under the immediate superintendence and control of one or more directors, to be appointed in each port where such institutions are established; as the acts referred to contemplated they should be invested with authority to provide all the necessary supplies, and appoint and employ such officers and servants as may from time to time be adequate to the wants of each establishment,



and, as a measure of economy, it be made lawful for the President to assign and employ surgeons and assistant surgeons of the army and navy, to go on duty in the several hospitals already established, or to be hereafter established, for the reception of sick and disabled seamen.

One such director to each hospital it is believed would be sufficient, according to existing arrangements. The duties devolving on directors of hospitals, had such been originally appointed, have been to some extent discharged by collectors and other officers of the customs, acting in the capacity of agents of the hospital fund; no incompatibility appearing to exist in those trusts, and their union being productive of economy, inasmuch as these officers would be willing to undertake the duties required for a small additional compensation, much less in amount than would be required to compensate suitable persons selected specially for the purpose, and having no other public employment. The same remarks apply with equal force to surgeons and assistant surgeons, detailed from the army and navy, on the professional duty of the establishments.

It is, therefore, recommended, that the superior officer of the customs, in all ports where public hospitals are established, be constituted by law director of the hospital at such port for the time being. Of the propriety of allowing additional compensation, as well to the officers of the customs, upon whom the discharge of these duties devolve, as to the medical officers of the army and navy assigned to public hospitals, I entertain no doubt. It ought to be so graduated, however, as to allow to those having the most onerous duties to perform the highest rate of compensation, varying from \$500 to \$250 per annum, or thereabout.

In regard to the government of such institutions, it may be remarked, generally, that they should be so ordered as to promote every possible degree of frugality consistent with the comfort of their inmates, and especially in reference to all expenditures for officers and servants. A superintending and discretionary power to check any extravagance or abuses should be vested in the director; every thing appertaining to the economy and internal management of the institutions should be under the direction of the surgeons, aided by the services of a steward and matron, with suitable regulations to secure the proper care of all stores and other property purchased for the uses of the establishment.

For some valuable suggestions and many interesting details connected with the police and government of public hospitals, I would respectfully refer to a communication made by the Hon. the Secretary of the Navy, to the Senate, transmitting a report from a board of medical gentlemen dated 25th May, 1812. It is numbered 92, in documents of 1st session 12th Congress.

So far as relates to the administration and disbursement of the fund for the relief of seamen in those districts of the Union where there are no public hospitals provided, nothing occurs to me in the shape of further legislation as necessary to secure a more perfect accountability, or faithful application of its resources. Its benefits are dispensed through the agency of the department and officers of the customs, under such restrictions, having reference to expenditure, as its limited resources demand; and all disbursements made by authority of the department and conformable to the limitations imposed by it, are settled by the accounting officers of the Treasury. The system is simple, familiar to those seeking its benefits, and has so far worked well.

Nothing further, which is material, occurs to me as proper to be included in the project of a law on this subject.

Should these opinions meet the approbation of the Senate, and the desire have been, by having drawn up "the project of a law," to have these views flung into the form of an act, in conformity with such part of the existing laws as may be proper, the department will be happy, on an intimation to that effect, to furnish the outline of such an act.

A copy of a circular (marked A) addressed to various collectors and other officers of the customs, with a view to elicit information on the subject of the resolutions, with all the replies which have been received, numbered from 1 to 9, are herewith enclosed, as containing information which may be useful.

All which is respectfully submitted.

LEVI WOODBURY,  
*Secretary of the Treasury.*

HON. RICHARD M. JOHNSON,  
*Vice President and President of the Senate.*

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### SCHEDULE OF PAPERS

*Accompanying report of the Secretary of the Treasury, dated the 12th inst.*

A. Circular to collectors.

1. Letter from collector at Passamaquoddy.
2. " from collector at Portland.
3. " from collector at Boston.
4. " from collector at Newport.
5. " from collector at Ocracock.
6. " from collector at Newbern.
7. " from collector at Key West.
8. " from collector at New Orleans.
9. " from surveyor at Louisville.

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A.

*Circular to the collectors of the customs.*

TREASURY DEPARTMENT, *March 16, 1837.*

SIR: I subjoin certain resolutions of the Senate on the subject of the erection of marine hospitals, and have to request that you will furnish the department with such information upon all the heads of inquiry contained therein as it may be in your power to give, either from your own knowledge and experience, or which may be accessible to you from other sources of information. You will please transmit your reply previous to the 1st of October next.

I am, very respectfully,  
Your obedient servant,

LEVI WOODBURY,  
*Secretary of the Treasury.*

the COLLECTOR OF CUSTOMS at



## IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES,

*February 3, 1837.*

*Resolved*, That the Secretary of the Treasury be instructed to ascertain what it will cost to erect three hospitals, of suitable dimensions, for the relief of sick and disabled seamen and watermen upon the waters of the Mississippi river, at the most suitable places for that purpose ; also, what it will cost to erect the same number, if needed, at the most important points on the Atlantic and Gulf coasts.

*Resolved*, That the Secretary of the Treasury be further instructed to draw up the project of a law to regulate the disbursement of funds for the relief of sick and disabled seamen, and for the government of hospitals erected for that purpose.

*Resolved*, That the Secretary of the Treasury be instructed to enumerate those ports and places in the United States where, because suitable accommodations for the sick cannot be obtained, or from any other cause, there is a strong necessity for hospitals, and to make report upon this and the other institutions in these resolutions at the next session of Congress.

Attest :

ASBURY DICKENS,

*Secretary.*

No. 1.

CUSTOM-HOUSE, PASSAMAQUODDY,

*September 18, 1837.*

SIR : In reply to the inquiries contained in your circular, dated the 16th of March, 1837, I have to remark, that there having been very little difficulty in obtaining suitable accommodations for sick and disabled seamen in this district, under the present regulations, and the number being too small to justify the expense of erecting and maintaining a hospital here at present, no change is deemed necessary in the system already established.

In regard to the expense of erecting the hospitals referred to in the resolutions of the Senate, of the 3d February, 1837, not having the means of forming a judgment, it will not be expected that I should express an opinion.

I am, with great respect, sir,

Your obedient servant,

S. A. MORSE, *Collector.*

Hon. LEVI WOODBURY,

*Secretary of the Treasury,**Washington.*

No. 2.

COLLECTOR'S OFFICE,

DISTRICT OF PORTLAND AND FALMOUTH,

*Portland, September 18, 1837.*

SIR : I received from my predecessor in this office your circular of the 16th of March last, requesting such information, called for by the resolutions of the Senate of the 3d of February, 1837, in relation to the expedi-

ency of erecting additional marine hospitals, as may be in my power to give; and, in reply, would observe that a brick building, suitable for the residence of the superintendent, and for the accommodation of the sick and disabled seamen of this district, could be built and furnished for twenty thousand dollars.

The disbursement of the funds for the support of the hospitals might be made, under the direction of the Secretary of the Treasury, as they ever have been, by the collectors of the several districts in which the hospitals shall be located.

Neither my predecessor nor myself have been able to procure, by contract with any responsible individual, suitable accommodations for the sick and disabled seamen of this district, at the rate of compensation to which the collector of the district is limited; and I have been obliged to place them in a part of the almshouse of the city, on the terms and conditions specified in the accompanying copy of a contract with the overseers of that establishment.

There is a great aversion among our seamen to this arrangement; and, although it is the best I have been able to make, many of them, and of the more valuable class too, will expend every particle of their property and credit before they will go to a hospital which is a part of, or connected with, a poor-house.

Maine is the third State in the Union in point of tonnage; and, with a coast made entirely by bays, capes, and islands, presenting a succession of fine harbors, from New Hampshire line to the province of New Brunswick, she being now the second, must, at no distant day, rank first in number of native seamen. These harbors are kept open during the severest winter weather, by the great tides here prevailing, which enables our seamen to continue in their employment, whilst ports far south of us are closed or obstructed by ice.

All the inhabitants of our islands, and most of those of the capes and headlands, are seamen or fishermen, or more or less employed on the water, and entitled to the benefit of the acts for the relief of sick and disabled seamen and watermen, many of whom, should they become sick and disabled during any great commercial embarrassment, or wounded in war, after expending what little property they have, might avail themselves of this bounty of the Government, and would make an immense addition to the number of hospital inmates, who are now composed entirely of the floating class of seamen.

During the last war, this port was much frequented by privateers, from Baltimore, New York, and Rhode Island, to recruit men, and to land their sick and wounded. Then private houses were opened for their relief. This was attended with great inconvenience to the citizens, as well as increased expense to Government; for it was found impracticable to adopt or enforce hospital regulations, either in the government of the seamen or attendants.

Three thousand seamen are employed in the tonnage of this district, exclusive of those engaged in the open boat fisheries, and those arriving here from other districts; and the numbers in each of these employments are annually increasing.

There were admitted to the hospital establishment at the poor-house in this port, under contracts similar to the copy enclosed,

From the 16th September, 1833, to 16th September, 1834 -	-	56
“ “ 1834, “ “ 1835 -	-	52



From the 16th September, 1835, to the 16th September, 1836 - 62  
 " " 1836, " " 1837 - 88

and these from the class of seamen stated above. There is a great desire and anxiety on the part of the seamen for a hospital here, which they can look to with pride as their home in sickness; and an appropriation for such an object, should Congress deem it expedient, would be gratefully received by every seaman, as well as by all others who feel an interest in the welfare of this most valuable, but hitherto improvident class of our citizens.

I have the honor to be, sir,

With great respect,

Your obedient servant,

JOHN ANDERSON,

*Collector.*

The Hon. LEVI WOODBURY,

*Secretary of the Treasury, Washington.*

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No. 3.

CUSTOM-HOUSE, BOSTON,

*September 12, 1837.*

SIR: In reply to your circular of March 16, but recently received at this office, I have to remark that a hospital is much needed at Holmes's Hole, Martha's Vineyard, in this State. Great numbers of vessels, both coasters and from foreign ports, put in there, particularly in the winter, from hard and perilous weather, with crews often worn down with fatigue and disease, or frost-bitten. There are few if any places on the sea-board where a hospital is more needed. I cannot give you an estimate of the cost of erecting hospitals on the Mississippi and the Atlantic coast, without knowing the places where they ought to be or are to be erected.

Very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

DAVID HENSHAW, *Collector.*

Hon. LEVI WOODBURY.

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No. 4.

DISTRICT AND PORT OF NEWPORT,

*Collector's Office, September 16, 1837.*

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your circular of the 16th of March last, on the subject of hospitals, and, in reply, enclose copy of a former report on the same subject; also, a letter from the surgeon of the marine hospital at this place, which comprise all the information in my possession.

I am, sir, very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

W. LITTLEFIELD, *Collector.*

Hon. LEVI WOODBURY,

*Secretary of the Treasury.*

NEWPORT, *September 12, 1837.*

SIR: Agreeably to your request, I have read the letter from the Secretary of the Treasury, which you handed me a short time since, as well as certain resolutions of the Senate therein contained, in relation to marine hospitals. The principal object of those resolutions appears to be to procure information relative to the places most suitable for the location of such establishments, and the probable cost of erecting them.

As to the peculiar fitness and local advantages of this place for a marine hospital, over almost every other on the coast, and the absolute necessity of some further provision, even for the comfortable accommodation of the sick, I presume that nothing new can either be expected or desired, in addition to what has already been presented to the department.

It is probably as well known at Washington, as it is to the commercial community throughout the country, that, in the winter season, during the prevalence of our strong northerly and westerly winds, this is almost the only accessible port on the coast; and the one of all others, in case of sickness, stress of weather, or other casualties at sea, to which the hopes of the mariner are almost exclusively directed.

It also well known, that at such times (to say nothing of the detention of vessels here by adverse winds) the navigation to the other ports in this State, situated on the bay above us, is frequently obstructed by ice, so that, in proportion to its extent, the commercial interest of Rhode Island requires the location of such an establishment in Newport, no less than that of every other State bordering on the Atlantic.

Being ignorant of what are the precise intentions of Government in relation to the number and extent, or even of the location of such hospitals as are proposed to be established, it is almost impossible to say on how large or small a scale one at this point might be required, or to calculate the probable cost of the same, until these preliminaries are definitely settled.

Assuming, however, that but one establishment of the kind is intended between New York and Boston, and that this is the place to be selected for its location, I should suppose that one would be required sufficiently extensive to accommodate from fifty to seventy-five patients, and that the expense would not probably exceed fifteen thousand dollars.

Respectfully, yours, &c.,

T. P. MOORE.

WILLIAM LITTLEFIELD, Esq. *Collector, &c.*

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DISTRICT AND PORT OF NEWPORT,

*Collector's Office, October 13, 1836.*

SIR: In answer to your circular of June 23d, I have the honor to report that the experience of many years has fully proved that the establishment of a marine hospital at this port, on a liberal scale, would materially conduce to the comfort and relief of that class of men for whose benefit the act of July 16, 1798, was passed. It is a fact well known to mariners, that this port is always accessible, and can be entered at times and with winds that prevent a free ingress to other harbors. Of this knowledge they avail themselves when thrown upon our coast in the stormy months of winter. Frequently, when within sight of their port of destination, after standing off



and on until their crews are completely exhausted, they are compelled to bear up for Newport; and here, reduced by disease, brought on by exposure and sufferings, such as no other class of our citizens are called on to endure, very often frostbitten, and in the last stage of human misery, they are landed, and I wish it was in my power to say comfortably accommodated. But such is not the fact. Under the present arrangements, and at the rates for board and nursing now authorized, none but the most common hovel can be procured for their receptions; and in narrow, ill-contrived, unventilated cells, poorly lodged, and in every respect inadequately provided for, seamen have to struggle on as they can; and with means provided, it is matter of astonishment that the surgeon is able to effect as many cures as he does.

Another local advantage that this port possesses over those that are situated higher up the bay, is, that it is not liable to be blocked up by ice; whereas Providence, Bristol, and Warren are frequently subject to this inconvenience. In certain seasons, this is a great rendezvous for coasting and fishing crafts. Vessels, too, from foreign ports, frequently touch here for orders; and others, from southern and unhealthy sections of the country, for clean bills of health; all necessarily bringing together a large number of seamen, whose situations may require hospital relief. The United States already possess an unexceptionable site for an institution of the kind proposed. If to these be added its acknowledged "salubrity of position and peculiar fitness for recruiting the invalid, it is presumed that no point on our coast presents higher claims for the location of a public hospital for the relief of sick and disabled seamen," than Newport.

I have the honor to be,

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

W. LITTLEFIELD, *Collector.*

Hon. LEVI WOODBURY,

*Secretary of the Treasury.*

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No. 5.

COLLECTOR'S OFFICE, DISTRICT OF OCRACOCK,

*August 28, 1837.*

SIR: I have the honor, in answer to your circular of the 16th March last, in regard to the erection of marine hospitals, to state there is few points on the southern coast where one is more required than in this district. I beg leave to refer you to the many petitions to Congress, signed by all the collectors of the interior ports connected with this inlet, as well as by merchants, masters, &c., and to my letter of the 12th of August, 1836, in answer to your circular, on the same subject, of the 23d of June preceding. The causes still exist, and, in fact, in a greater degree, as the owner of the building then occupied as a hospital has converted it to some other use, and there is no other that can be had that is at all calculated for the accommodation of sick and disabled seamen. Last summer and fall we were compelled to put ten or fifteen sick persons in three small rooms, and those not at all calculated for persons in their situation. At present, I have to accommodate them in a boat-house belonging to the United States, which I have fitted up in the best manner I could for their reception during the warm months. I am in hopes the same reasons that induced Congress once to make an appropriation (or rather the House of Representatives) for

this object, will induce them to do so again ; and I trust the Senate will concur. I believe the Committee of Commerce have recommended the appropriation at several different sessions, or whenever it has been brought before them.

When it is known that this inlet is situated from seventy to one hundred and eighty miles from the different interior ports, and entirely separated from them, except by water, and through which about two-thirds of the commerce of the State passes, (not less than one hundred vessels a month throughout the year,) it must be evident there is almost constantly a great accumulation of seamen at this point. Since my residence here, I have frequently counted from thirty to fifty sail of vessels at a time, detained for weeks, sometimes, by adverse winds, lightening on the swashes, waiting for their cargoes from the interior, &c. During the summer and fall months our seaports are always more or less sickly with bilious and other fevers, so common to this climate, and particularly up fresh water rivers. Seamen are frequently taken sick on their way down, or while here, having the seeds of the disease in them before they leave ; and even when taken sick, these prefer being brought here, where the air is pure, and not a healthier place in the United States, and where they generally recover ; while, if they are taken sick and remain up the country, the reverse is the case, particularly to northern constitutions. It may not be amiss to remark, three-fourths of the commerce of this State is carried on by northern vessels and seamen. It certainly could not be considered a sectional matter, as the north are as much, or perhaps more, interested than the south ; and although the expenses would be increased at first in the erection of a hospital, yet they would be reduced at the other ports in proportion ; and ultimately the principal expenditure would be made in this district. Masters of vessels having sick seamen on board their vessels, with contagious as well as other diseases, will land them, regardless of what may become of them afterwards, or the danger to the inhabitants on the island. I have certainly made this letter longer than I expected, perhaps longer than necessary ; but knowing, as I do, from nearly five years' experience, besides information obtained from others, that humanity requires some better provision for so valuable a class of our citizens than does exist in this district at present, will, I trust, be a sufficient excuse for trespassing on your time.

I have the honor to be,

Very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

S. BROWN, *Collector.*

To the Hon. LEVI WOODBURY,

*Secretary of the Treasury.*

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

October 14, 1837.

SIR: I have received from Mr. Sylvester Brown, the collector of Ocracock, in the State of North Carolina, a communication on the subject of a "marine hospital" to be established in that section of the country.

All the tonnage in the trade of middle and northern Carolina passes



through Ocracock inlet, and frequently vessels are detained for days on the "swash," so that if a hospital be established in this part of the coast, no position is more eligible than that of Ocracock. Cape Hattaras on the north, and Cape Lookout on the south, are spots where vessels from every part of the Union are frequently wrecked, and sick and disabled seamen belonging to every port of the United States are occasionally detained for medical service and attendance. It would seem, therefore, that the whole commercial interest of the country would be benefitted by the establishment of a hospital in this section. In addition to this, Ocracock is remarkably healthy, and I am sure that no place could be selected where the unfortunate would have a better chance of being restored to health.

Very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

CHARLES SHEPARD.

To the SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY.

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Ocracock, *September 9, 1837.*

DEAR SIR: I have recently received a circular from the Secretary of the Treasury, on the subject of erecting marine hospitals at the most important points along our sea coast, and requiring such information as may be desirable to enable the department to recommend the most important.

I am satisfied you are so well acquainted with the location of this inlet, the nature of our navigation, the great number of vessels which are constantly employed in the transportation of our produce from the various interior ports of the State through Ocracock, it will be unnecessary to call your attention to every point, as I have, from a residence here of four or five years, as collector, and agent for sick and disabled seamen, had an opportunity from experience of obtaining such information as may be useful, and from a conviction that humanity to so valuable a class of our citizens as seamen, when sick and disabled, does require some better provision in this district than at present exists. I hope, as I am sure, you will excuse me for calling your attention to it, and particularly so soon after you have taken your seat in Congress. My reasons for writing you so early are because I understand the subject will in all probability be acted on during this session, and perhaps at an early day, and that you may have an opportunity of giving it that attention you are of opinion it requires. As a proof of the importance of a marine hospital in this district, I beg leave to call your attention to the various petitions signed by all the collectors of the interior ports to which this inlet leads, as well as from merchants, masters, &c., now I presume on file in some of the offices at Washington. Several years ago the House of Representatives made an appropriation for this object, but, for want of time, or some other cause, it was not acted on in the Senate. The Committee on Commerce has, I believe, been so well convinced of its necessity, that they have universally reported in favor of it. There certainly can be but one opinion of its importance, when the nature of the navigation, the great accumulation of vessels, the distance from any interior port, entirely cut off, except by water and up extensive sounds, is understood. From a correct account of vessels, kept for one year by myself, passing out through this inlet, they numbered about 1,200. I think nearly two thirds of the exports of our State passes out here. It is not uncom-

mon to see 20, 30, and sometimes 50 sail of vessels at a time, lying in the different roadsteads and channels, windbound, or lightening their cargoes on the swashes, or waiting for them to be sent down from up the country : and during the summer and fall months, it is known our interior ports are always more or less sickly with bilious and other fevers so common to our climate. They often leave their sick, or, taken on the way down, after arriving here, having the seeds of disease on them, masters of vessels will land them, regardless of accommodation or medical aid. From the hospital returns, made quarterly from this district, there are many provided for, perhaps three where there is one at any other of the interior ports. This place is also remarkable for health, and a very large proportion of those who come into the hospital here recover, which may be mostly attributed to the purity of the air. As it could not be expected to erect a hospital at every port, and as this is certainly the most central and eligible in this section of our State, I have great hopes you will give it your aid. I am certain it will meet with the sanction of not only your own constituents, but of all other persons interested. Perhaps it may not be amiss to remark that nothing sectional can be urged against it. I am satisfied two thirds more of our commerce is carried on in northern vessels, manned by their own seamen, and much more liable to be taken sick upon fresh water rivers than natives of the State. I have been particular in noting the proportion of seamen which have been received in hospital here, and find three-fourths at least are from the northern and eastern States. I am afraid I have trespassed entirely too long on your time, and the only excuse I can make, which I trust will be acceptable, is the interest I have taken and still take in this matter. I should be pleased to receive a line from you on this, as well as any other subject, should you have leisure, and any public document would be very acceptable.

I am, sir, with much respect,

Your obedient servant,

S. BROWN.

CHARLES SHEPARD, Esquire,

*Member of Congress, Washington, D. C.*

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No. 6.

CUSTOM-HOUSE, NEWBERN,

*September 18, 1837.*

SIR : In answer to your circular of the 16th of March last, I give it as my opinion that a large hospital is not necessary in any port of North Carolina, but that a small, comfortable building is necessary at each of the ports of Camden, Edenton, Washington, Ocracock, Newbern, and Wilmington, and suitable persons appointed to take charge of them.

I can speak with certainty as respects this port, for I find much difficulty in procuring any sort of a place for sick sailors ; and such as can be procured are miserable hovels, unfit for human beings to inhabit. Should one be erected for this port, I would recommend that it be built two or three miles below the town, on the river, for two reasons. One is, because the commissioners of the town will not allow any person to be brought up to town who may be sick with any contagious disease ; the other is because



they would be so far removed from the *grog-shops*, that they would recover much sooner from the disease, and be discharged.

I am, very respectfully, sir,

Your obedient servant,

THOMAS S. SINGLETON, *Collector*.

HON. LEVI WOODBURY,

*Secretary of the Treasury.*

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No. 7.

COLLECTOR'S OFFICE, KEY WEST,

*September 15, 1837.*

SIR : In obedience to your circular of the 16th of March, I proceed to answer some of the subjects of inquiry embraced in the resolutions of the Senate of the 3d of February, and subjoined to your circular. First, as to the necessity of a hospital for the relief of sick and disabled seamen at this port.

The location of Key West, you will observe, is on the very edge of the Gulf stream, about midway for our return commerce from the ports of the Gulf of Mexico, the Mexican States, and a part of the West Indies ; that our great and increasing commerce is here condensed into a very narrow sea, and, on account of the lights on this coast being useful land-marks, passing vessels usually come in sight, and within a few miles of this place. Key West has a safe harbor, of easy access for the largest class of vessels ; has no port charges, and is inviting to vessels to call and leave the sick they may have on board. The "*northwest passage*," running from the Gulf stream through our harbor to the Gulf of Mexico, leads all vessels using it within a musket-shot of the wharves. This pass is already used by a multitude of vessels, and when the contemplated light-vessel shall have been placed at the northwest bar, it will be used by nearly all the vessels from the northern ports bound to and from St. Mark's, Appalachicola, St. Joseph's, Pensacola, Mobile, and the smaller class of vessels trading with New Orleans. Vessels using this pass already do, and will continue to, deposite their sick seamen at this port.

Sickness usually makes its appearance on board of vessels from sickly ports a few days after they get to sea. This is especially the case from St. Mark's and Tabasco ; and instances have been known of pilots bringing in vessels from those ports where the crews were unable, from sickness, to work the vessels in themselves. The number of passing seamen admitted to the fund at this port, have heretofore and probably always will, greatly exceed the number of sick from those employed in this district. The usual number engaged in wrecking, in this district, is about two hundred. The number of wrecked seamen brought in is annually about three hundred. The number engaged in fishing-smacks for the Havana market, about one hundred, besides those engaged in the foreign and coasting trade, and those on board of vessels which touch in for wood and water, for the deposite of their sick, or seeking freight ; many of which neither enter or clear at the custom-house. Key West, also, from its location, far from a producing country, is dearer as to all the necessary articles of living than any port of the West Indies. As a necessary consequence, labor, board, &c. is also dearer.

The present allowance for the support and nursing a sick seaman is but

\$3 per week ; while no family, not even a black family, will receive a patient for less than \$7 per week, which is about the price of board for a laboring man, exclusive of lodging and washing. The odd \$1 per week are sometimes made up from the funds of the seaman, if he happens to have any ; sometimes from the humane contributions of the sick man's captain, and sometimes from the charities of the citizens of this place. These charities, however, have made such frequent calls on the citizens that they are not always answered, and perhaps, in many instances, they do not even know their charities are needed until it is too late to be serviceable. At all events, great hardship and suffering, and, in too many instances, a waste of human life have resulted from the present mode of administering but *partial* relief. Patients recovering from tropical fevers require peculiar and light nourishments, administered at the right moment. Many, I doubt not, have been lost, because the partial allowance from the fund would not enable the poor nurse to prepare and administer a little chicken-water, the standing cost of the material of which is here \$1 25. Most of those who are *persuaded* (for all require urging to receive a sick seaman) to become nurses, are also burdened with the cares of a family, and perhaps support that family by washing. Humanity requires that sick seamen receive more systematic and careful attention.

All, or nearly all, the evils now existing at this port, in relation to sick seamen, would be remedied by the establishment of a hospital, where the medical attendance and the nursing would unite in the best means to restore health. The physician would no longer feel and express his mortification and indignation that his best efforts had been lost by the ignorance, mismanagement, or mistake of the nurse.

The cost of a proper building for a hospital will depend, in some measure, on its magnitude and the material of which it is constructed. The average cost of two story dwelling-houses of wood, glazed, painted, with galleries, cistern, and window-blinds, is from \$3,500 to \$4,500. There is on the island an abundant supply of building stone, well suited to the construction of permanent buildings ; it being limestone, lying in lamina or strata, and which may be fashioned, with an edged tool, to any desired form. Several buildings have been constructed of this material, and they promise to be durable. Lime, also, of a good quality, may be burned from this stone, and in any quantity. All other materials must be imported, as the wood growing here is too hard, and generally too short for building purposes.

I believe a building having two stories above a basement, (where the cooking, washing, &c. may be done,) may be constructed of the stone of the island, with a plaster of cement—galleries, cisterns, &c. of sufficient size to accommodate the matron, assistants, sick, &c., finished, with the necessary furniture for the accommodation of the sick, for the sum of fifteen to eighteen thousand dollars. The site, if at the outskirts of the town, may be had at from four hundred to six hundred dollars per acre.

Very respectfully,

I have the honor to be

Your obedient servant,

W. A. WHITEHEAD, *Collector.*

By A. GORDON, *Deputy Collector.*

Hon. LEVI WOODBURY,

*Secretary of the Treasury,*

*Washington.*



No. 8.

COLLECTOR'S OFFICE,  
New Orleans, August 18, 1837.

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your circular to collectors of customs, dated 16th March last, asking for information in relation to the erection of marine hospitals.

From my long personal acquaintance with the trade of the valley of the Mississippi, I feel well assured that the most prominent and useful points of location for marine hospitals, for the relief of sick and disabled seamen engaged in the navigation of the waters of the Mississippi river and its tributaries, are Louisville, in Kentucky, St. Louis, in Missouri, and Memphis, in Tennessee.

My experience in erecting buildings does not enable me to speak confidently as to the cost of suitable edifices at these points. Judging, however, from the price of materials and labor in the western country, I am of opinion that the sum of twenty-five or thirty thousand dollars each, for Louisville and St. Louis, would be sufficient; and for Memphis, I would recommend an expenditure of fifty thousand dollars, for the reason that this establishment would be the receptacle of the seamen of both the Ohio and Missouri trade.

The necessity of a marine hospital at this port has been made manifest to Congress, and induced an appropriation by that body, at its last session, of seventy thousand dollars, for the purchase of a site, and the erection of a suitable edifice. The sum appropriated will be found inadequate to the accomplishment of the object, as will be shown by the plans, specifications, and estimates, now preparing by sundry persons, in accordance with invitations for bids, issued by me under your instructions, all of which will be forwarded to you immediately after the 1st day of September next, that being the day fixed for opening the proposals that may be made. The plan and estimate furnished you last spring for this object is not on a scale beyond what is and will be required for the comfort of our seamen that visit this great and growing seaport.

I feel confident that I shall be supported in this opinion by our representatives in Congress, and particularly by Senator Nicholas, with whom I had a long conversation the evening previous to his departure for Washington.

I have the honor to be, sir,

Your most obedient servant,

JAS. W. BREEDLOVE, *Collector.*

The Hon. LEVI WOODBURY,

*Secretary of the Treasury, Washington.*

No. 9.

CUSTOM-HOUSE OFFICE,  
Port of Louisville, Ky., November 20, 1837.

SIR: In compliance with the instructions transmitted to this office in reference to the proposed United States marine hospital, I proceed to lay before you the subjoined considerations. And I trust the department will bear with me, if I should seem to depart from the line of my duties in bring-

ing certain matters before it, which are of so much importance that I deem it absolutely necessary to make the suggestions.

The site selected for the erection of the building is, in every respect, a desirable one, and if the proper measures are pursued in building the house, the establishment must minister, in an eminent degree, to the happiness and comfort of the numerous and increasing class of citizens directly interested in it. Permit me to suggest the propriety and necessity of connecting with the fever wards suitable apparatus for bathing, as it is universally admitted, since the days of Currie, of Liverpool, that no one remedy combines an equal number of characteristics, for meeting fever in its multiform varieties, none that more effectually controls its symptoms, and leads to a favorable termination. This bathing apparatus should be so constructed that baths of any required temperature may be given, without interfering with the comforts of the sick in the preparation.

Consumptive patients require a room, erected upon certain principles, for their own especial use. Facts and experiments have conclusively established the importance of a well regulated atmosphere, as the most important item in the treatment of this disease. Variations of temperature destroy the best resources of the healing art, and it is confidently believed that the amount of mortality in it might be greatly diminished by proper measures for preventing frequent vicissitudes of the atmosphere. It is certainly within the purview of the fostering powers of Government to take steps well calculated to protect the health of a large portion of our citizens, and the measures recommended are founded upon indisputable facts. An apparatus may be built by which the heat of the ward may be regulated to a degree. I subjoin a statement drawn up by our city architect, by which it will be seen that this is the most economical plan for heating the house. An attempt has been made to accomplish the objects above mentioned, by heated air, but this made things worse, because the oxygen of the atmosphere was consumed in heating the air. This is completely avoided by the steam apparatus. But I refer you to the accompanying statement of Mr. Shryock. These suggestions are very respectfully submitted to your deliberate judgment.

In relation to the officers of such an institution, I presume that our western hospitals will be established on the same footing with similar institutions already under the care of the Government, and it is therefore unnecessary to enter into a detail of provisions of this nature. I shall, consequently, confine myself to a mere statement of what officers may be deemed necessary, and the probable expense of such officers.

1st. A resident physician and surgeon, with good qualifications for the discharge of his duties, who shall devote his whole time to the care of the sick of the establishment. He should have three or four students as dressers, and these could easily be obtained for their board, on account of the facilities the hospital would furnish them in prosecuting their studies. These, as well as the superintendent, should be under the guidance and control of the physician. The salary of a competent physician would be about \$2,000 a year.

2d. A superintendent, with a family, whose duties should be specifically to attend to the various wants of the sick, in keeping their rooms clean, ventilating the rooms, preparing food and drinks, controlling the nurses, et cetera. A proper superintendent may be obtained for one thousand



dollars. Nurses may be had at from two hundred and fifty dollars to three hundred dollars per annum.

I believe the foregoing exhibits a full answer to the queries contained in your circular; and, hoping that the accomplishment of the humane designs of the Government may be commensurate with the philanthropy of its intentions,

I am, very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

EDWARD S. CAMP, *Surveyor, &c.*

Hon. LEVI WOODBURY,

*Secretary of the Treasury.*

The apparatus necessary for heating buildings by steam are a spherical or cylindrical boiler, (for generating steam,) having a fireplace and ash-pit, as in common engine boilers; also an internal and external safety-valve, and apparatus for supplying the boiler with water. Connected with the boiler is a steam-pipe for conducting the heat to the place where it is to be applied; from this main pipe the heat is distributed by smaller pipes, having stop-cocks to let steam into them, or shut it off, as occasion may require. These pipes are introduced into ornamental pedestals, columns, vases, or figures; the air of the room becomes heated by contact with their surfaces, and the heat is equally distributed. When apartments are heated by steam, the air is not contaminated, and the heat produced is regular and more salubrious and pleasant to the human lungs than any other artificial heat. It can be extended, in every direction, to a great distance, and made to ascend, descend, or move horizontally, with equal facility. Hence, a single fire, which may be attended by one person, can be made to heat very extensive buildings in all their parts. It should be employed at a low pressure, so as not to give the surface containing it a greater heat than  $212^{\circ}$ ; and, when so employed, is perfectly safe.

Respectfully,  
G. SHRYOCK.

To EDWARD S. CAMP, Esq.,

*Collector of the port of Louisville.*

